

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1023

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL TORONTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0236

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: THE DEALER INCREASES THE ODDS IN HIS FAVOR

BY ARRANGING DECK

1. GOQ IS PROCEEDING APACE WITH PREPARATIONS TO HOLD "SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION REFERENDUM." LE DEVOIR OF JUNE 23 REVEALED EXISTENCE OF "CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM" WHICH PURPORTEDLY RECOMMENDS THAT ONLY CABINET OR A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION (SOME 10 PERCENT) OF ELECTORATE MAY DEMAND A REFERENDUM AND HAVE RIGHT TO FRAME QUESTION. IN FORMER CASE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MUST RATIFY WORDING OF QUESTION BY SIMPLE MAJORITY. TO ADMINISTER REFERENDUM THE MEMO SUGGESTS CREATION OF OFFICIAL TO BE CALLED "DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POPULAR CONSULTATION" WHO WOULD HAVE FULL AUTHORITY OVER MACHINERY OF REFERENDUM PROCESS, AS WELL AS, SUPERVISE ELECTION OFFICIALS IN EACH CONSTITUENCY. MEMO SUGGESTS CAMPAIGN LAST MINIMUM OF 28 AND MAXIMUM OF 45 DAYS.

2. MEMORANDUM FURTHER SUGGESTS CAMPAIGN COORDINATION AND FINANCING BE CONTROLLED BY COMMITTEES WHICH REPRESENT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, PRESSURE GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS
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OF POLITICAL DIVERGENCES WHO WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN REFERENDUM. THESE TWO COMMITTEES, ONE FOR AND OTHER AGAINST ISSUE, WOULD WORK THROUGH SINGLE "OFFICIAL AGENT." ONLY RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES AND INDIVIDUALS COULD CONTRIBUTE FUNDS. CORPORATE BODIES, ESPECIALLY PRIVATE COMPANIES, ARE TO BE PROHIBITED FROM MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS. PERSONAL DONATIONS ARE TO BE LIMITED TO 3000 DOLLARE

:9,548?7589, *49. 00LITICAL PARTIES WOULD
BE EQUAL FOR ALL PARTIES AND PROVIDED FROM FUNDS
ALREADY PUT AT PARTY'S DISPOSITION BY THE STATE UNDER PROPOSED
BILL 2.

3. MEMORANDUM WAS PREPARED BY GROUP WORKING UNDER MINISTER OF
STATE FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORM BURNS. MUCH OF ITS CONTENTS ARE
BASED ON CONCEPTS TAKEN FROM SIMILAR LEGISLATION IN FRANCE,
SWITZERLAND, SEVERAL AMERICAN STATES, AND IN PARTICULAR, ON
BRITISH EXPERIENCE WITH 1975 COMMON MARKET REFERENDUM.
CABINET REPORTEDLY HAS ALREADY APPROVED CONTENTS OF
MEMO IN PRINCIPLE. DETAILED CONSIDERATION IS TO BEGIN THIS WEEK
WITH EXPECTED TABLING OF LEGISLATION TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE END
OF JULY.

4. COMMENT: IF SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION REFERENDUM IS INDEED BASED
ON THESE OR SIMILAR PRECEPTS--AS IT PROBABLY WILL BE, OPPONENTS
ARE LIKELY TO BE AT SOME DISADVANTAGE. NATURALLY, THE GOQ WILL
CHOOSE TIMING AND WORDING OF QUESTION TO SUIT ITS OWN
PURPOSES. MOREOVER, THE FORCED GROUPING OF ALL THOSE FOR OR
AGAINST INTO SINGLE COMMITTEES WILL FAVOR RELATIVELY HOMO-
GENEOUS SEPARATIST ADVOCATES WHILE DISADVANTAGING MIXED
BAG OF OPPONENTS AS MANY OF LATTER ARE ACTIVELY HOSTILE TO ONE
ANOTHER ON ALL BUT INDEPENDENCE QUESTION9 STRICT LIMITATIONS
ON FINANCING ARE EVIDENTLY IMPOSED TO OFFSET ADVANTAGES RELATIVELY
WELL-HEELED OPPONENTS MIGHT OTHERWISE ENJOY. ASSUMING MEMORANDUM
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IS GENUINE, WE WOULD GUESS SOME OF ELEMENTS MOST
BLATANTLY FAVORING ADVOCATES MAY BE MODIFIED TO LIMIT
CHALLENGES TO LEGITIMACY OF REFERENDUM. NONETHELESS, I WOULD
RECKON LEGISLATION, WHEN TABLED, WILL FOLLOW CLOSELY
RECOMMENDATIONS IN MEMORANDUM.
MCNAMARA

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Message Attributes

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